

**Rhode Island Department of Education
School Performance Categories
Face-To-Face Meeting Agreement**

**Cumberland High and Middle Schools
April 1, 2002**

Attending from Cumberland: Jim Higgins, Cumberland School Comm. Chair; Marilyn R. Murray, Cumberland Teachers Association; Linda L. Prescott, Cumberland High School Math Dept. Chair; Sharon Michalopoulos, Cumberland High School SIT Representative; John Scullin, Cumberland High School Principal; Joseph M. Nasif, Cumberland Superintendent; Kenneth R. DiPietro, Cumberland Asst. Superintendent; Barbara M. Vanasse, Cumberland Middle School SIT Chair; Joyce A. Hindle-Koutsogiane, Cumberland Middle School Principal; Denise Ahern, Cumberland Special Education Director

RIDE Staff: Diana Crowley, Maria Lindia, Robert Mason, Ina Woolman, Judith Keeley, Nancy Warren, Elizabeth Hyman, Richard Latham, Elliot Krieger, Marilyn McShane Levine, Mary Ann Snider

RIDE Welcome Meeting and Orientation

Deputy Commissioner Todd Flaherty welcomed the group and gave an overview of the process and objectives of the meeting including:

- Establishing of agreements on “next steps” as outlined in the School Performance Category Technical Assistance Bulletin with regard to required District/school/RIDE actions;
- Addressing district capacity for implementing activities/next steps (to be outlined in the May 1st CRP, Article 31 – Strategic Planning document for submittal to RIDE which also needs to be approved publicly in Cumberland School Advisory Board meeting);
- Addressing RIDE capacity to support, if applicable; and
- Generating a meeting report which needs to be made “public” at the district’s school advisory board meeting.

District/School Response

Representatives from Cumberland were given the opportunity to respond to the performance category designation for Cumberland High School and Cumberland Middle School. Joseph M. Nasif, the Superintendent, began the review. He indicated that five years ago they established a curriculum reform cycle that schedules each content area into a three-year review leading to standards-based curriculum development. He also indicated that Cumberland has a professional development system emphasizing

curriculum development. As of March of 2002, curriculum work on mathematics, English and science has been completed and aligned to New Standards. Further, the District has adopted Business Education and the Fine and Performing Arts curriculum. He also indicated that Cumberland has a professional development system emphasizing curriculum development, performance assessment, diverse learning strategies and technology applications. Other measures underway to improve instruction are:

- Increasing instructional days to 183.
- Providing extended school year services at elementary level and a summer middle school.
- Investment of local funds to initiate a compact for learning in every school following a SALT visit.
- Re-developed teacher evaluation system based on the Beginning Teacher Standards.

“In essence, we have invested in a number of long range, strategic efforts that we believe will achieve the impact we desire in student achievement.”

John Scullin, the High School Principal, indicated that they are currently preparing for a New England Association of Schools and Colleges visit in Spring of 2003. He ensured that the Cumberland High school's goal is to achieve success for all students. Strategies toward accomplishing the goal have been identified and are part of the school culture, however, changes will not happen overnight.

Dr. Joyce Hindle-Koutsogiane, the principal of Cumberland Middle school, indicated that for the 2002 testing cycle, 99% of their students took the state test. She also reported that they are planning on increasing reading emphasis and support for all students and adding support for English language learners especially focusing on mathematics instruction. Construction of a new wing is scheduled to be completed by August 9, 2002 which will help alleviate overcrowded classrooms and promote a pleasing student learning environment.

Programmatic/Instructional Actions

The High School Principal, Joseph Scullin described actions being considered or implemented to resolve the concern that 33.85% of the students received either “No Score” or showed “Little/No Evidence of achieving the Standard” on state testing over a three-year period. He linked his comments to 1) student motivation to perform on tests; 2) curriculum; and 3) professional development.

Regarding motivation to perform on tests: the High School has held 1) an incentive assembly for grades 9 & 10 addressing effort and pride; 2) the students who were suspended during the testing period were given a chance to come to school and take the tests; and 3) the Principal meets with students who are not treating test taking seriously.

Regarding curriculum: In alignment with district strategic priorities, the school is involved in standards-based curriculum development. The high school has adopted the *Interactive Mathematics* Project in grades 9-12. It is piloting *Investigation in Data, Number and Space*, mathematics program in grades 2-5. This will improve sequencing of mathematics instruction between grades, creating teacher support teams. Further, the school has implemented an applied sciences initiative and is going to link with the fire department to develop an Emergency Medical Technician in school program. The goal is to link relevancy of math and science classes to a work related context.

Additionally, Cumberland High School has created strategies to improve performance by:

- creating a math resource room staffed to help students experiencing difficulty with math; and
- offering remediation classes for students who show little or no evidence of meeting standards.

Over the next year, the high school staff will be addressing the following areas by:

- Performing an item analysis over three years to examine scores for consistent weaknesses in curriculum;
- Introducing a freshman advisory program and a K-12 guidance curriculum reform effort;
- Contracting services to analyze all data by sub-group performance;
- Establishing SIT priority in sub-group performance to direct Article 31 funds and efforts;
- Re-examining the sequence of instruction from middle to high school;
- Suggesting support systems for low performing students include:
 - creating a math resource room staffed to help students experiencing difficulty with math
 - offering remediation classes for students who show little or no evidence of meeting standards

The Cumberland Middle School Principal, Dr. Joyce Hindle-Koutsogiane, described actions being taken to closing the gap in student achievement:

- 1) contracting services through Northern Rhode Island Collaborative to analyze all data sub-group performance;
- 2) establishing SIT priority in sub-group performance to direct Article 31 funds and efforts;

- 3) offering two summer courses on brain compatible strategies to address learner diversity.

Differentiated learning strategies are very much embedded in the daily curriculum.

Over the next year, the Cumberland Middle School will be addressing the following areas by:

- Re-examining the sequence of instruction from middle to high school and Grade 5 to middle school;
- Planning walkthroughs to allow teachers to observe alternate, standards-based practices
- Holding an assessment activity day, once per month per subject area;
- Retrofitting technology in grades 6-8 through model classrooms and networking (Windows & Mac);
- Creating support systems for low performing students that will include:
 - Increased reading emphasis and support for all students
 - Add support for mathematics instruction of ELL students

IV. RIDE/CUMBERLAND AGREEMENTS

The changes/improvements spoken about will be incorporated in changes to the district strategic plan and school improvement plan. Dr. Flaherty indicated that it is vital that the attendees from Cumberland “capture (the) images of what changes are being proposed in revised plans by May”. There was agreement to do that for the May 1st submission.

These changes include:

- Subsequent to the completion of their standards-based curriculum in English language arts and mathematics, Cumberland district will require curriculum articulation committees from one school level to the next, K-12;
- Cumberland (district and schools) will work to quantify outcomes (measurable results) for all students in its revised school plans and district strategic plan;
- Cumberland (district) will include strategies for improving student performance on revisions to strategic plans due May 1st to RIDE, particularly in the area of closing achievement gaps for schools;
- Cumberland (district and schools) will continue to look at English language arts/mathematics using the language-based approach to improve student performance. These strategies will be included in the strategic plan along with “differentiated learning approaches” and reflect those in their district and school plan;
- Cumberland (district) will move toward a district focus basis for professional development which targets standards-based teaching;
- Cumberland High School will identify a common set of expectations for all students for graduation by establishing a common core curriculum.

Potential RIDE Support for Cumberland:

Cumberland has started “off grade” assessments in grades 3, 5, 7 & 9 for English language arts and mathematics. The district may seek RIDE’s assistance in designing and implementing these supplemental assessments including being part of state and/or regional work in this area. RIDE will offer “professional practice” support upon request in term of reviewing curricula and professional development plans.